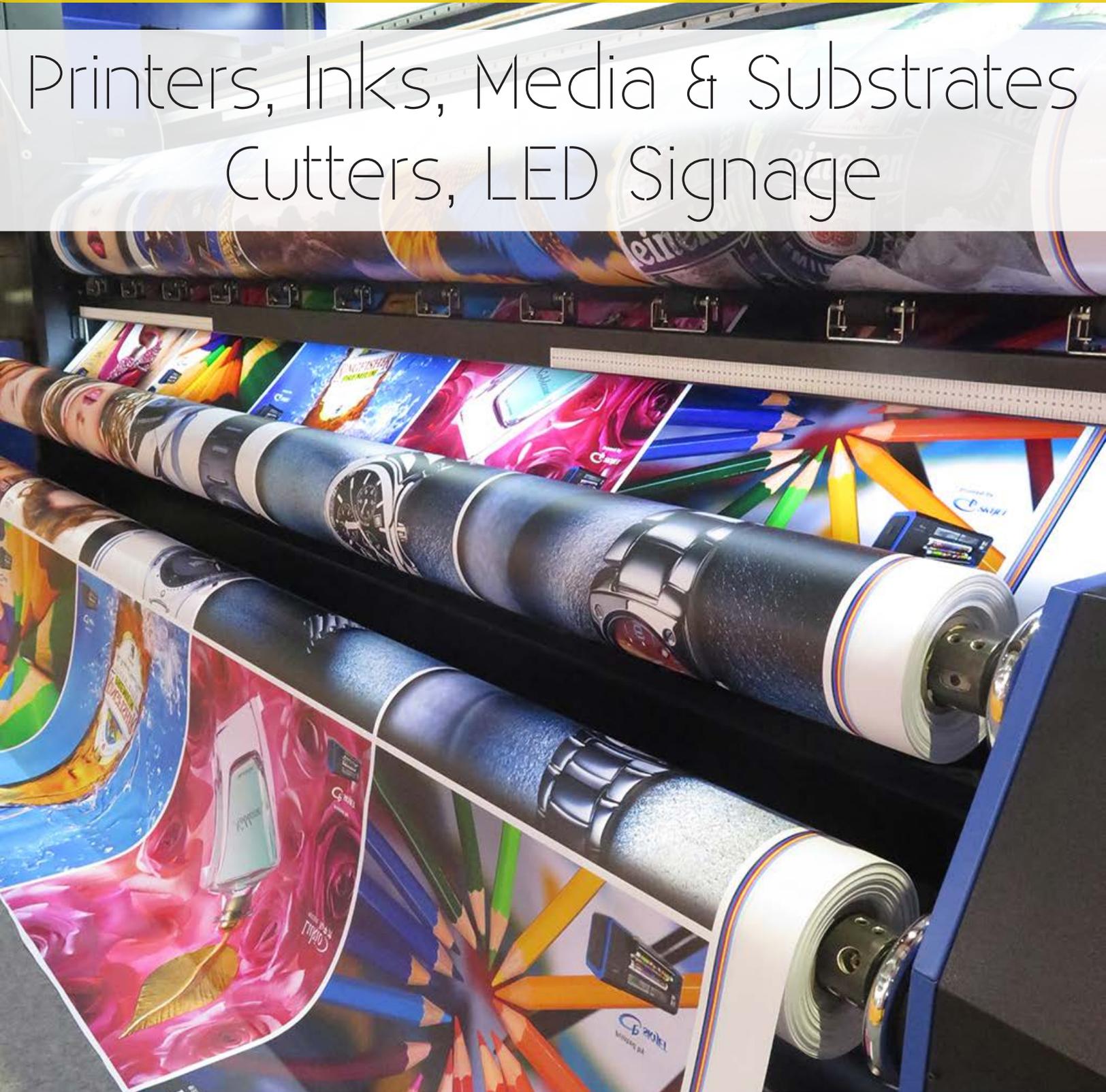


Printers, Inks, Media & Substrates Cutters, LED Signage



APPPEXPO 2015,
now in March

Nicholas Hellmuth

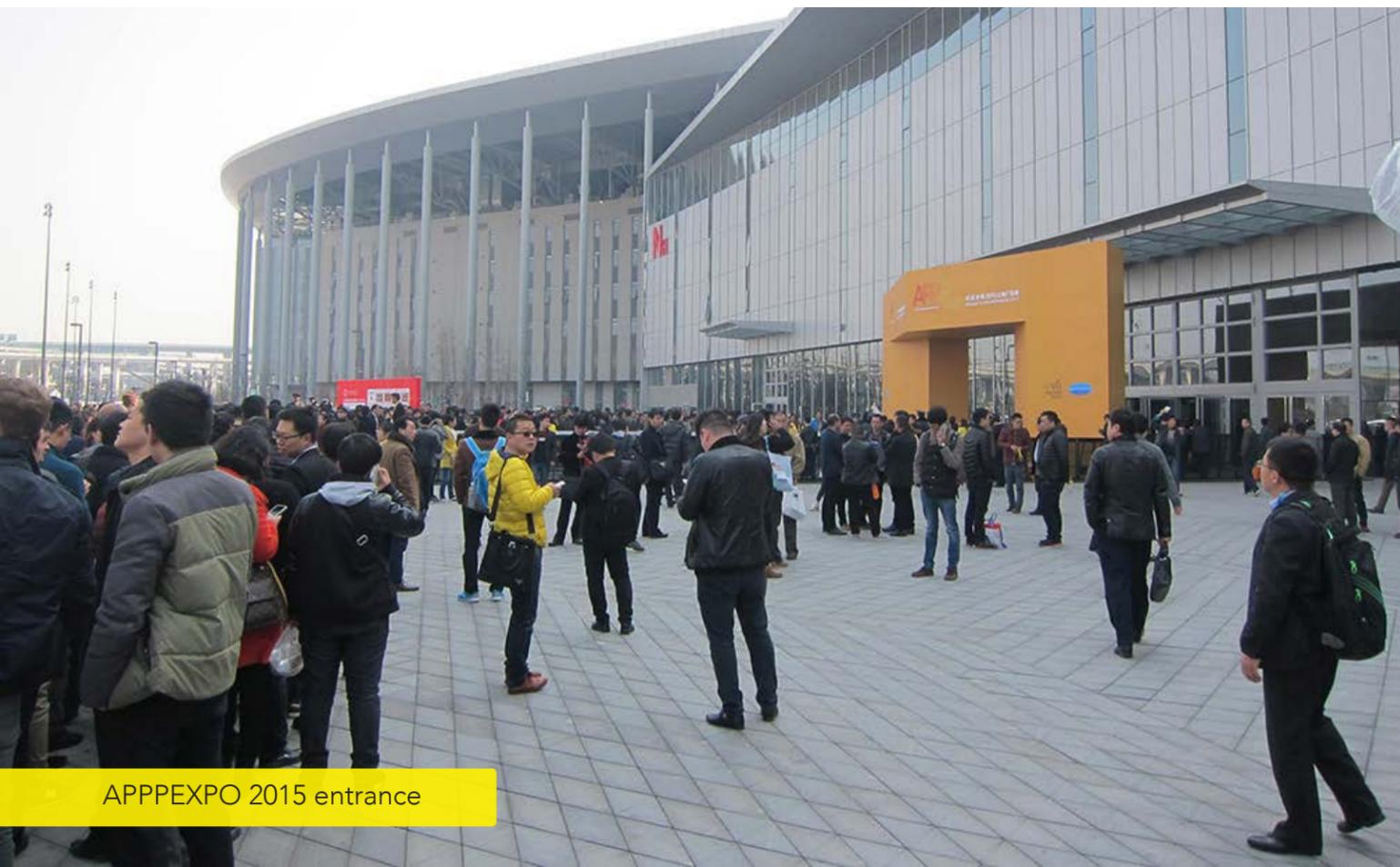
Front cover photograph, print sample from Skejet SDM3300i, a unique double-sided printing technology, from SkyAir-Ship.

Contents

UV-Cured Printers	2	CNC Routers,	26
Solvent Printers	6	LED, LCD Dynamic Digital Signage	28
Lots and lots of Textile Printers	8	Traditional Signage	29
Many T-shirt printers	11	Venue: Shanghai	30
Water-based printers	12	Taxis in China	30
Latex	13	Issues which should be improved for 2016	32
"3D Printers"	14	A to Z Index of Exhibitors (without city names)	35
"3D" Sublimation Printers	17	Hall maps at every entrance	35
3D Signage	18		35
Raised Relief Signage	18	Aisle markers	35
NEW Printheads	20	Issues, which will be improved for 2016	36
RIP Software	22	Conclusions	37
Cutters: for roll-fed signage	23	What we cover in TRENDS level?	38
After-Market Inks	24		



By coincidence in this photograph, there is Maria Renee Ayau (FLAAR, textile team) at left, Andres ("Mike") Morataya (FLAAR, UV printer team), Pablo Martinez (FLAAR, inks and Media team) at the right.



APPPEXPO 2015 entrance

This year the APPPEXPO changed the date of their exhibition (would not any longer be called "the July show" since the organizer moved the date to March). Also this year the expo took place in the brand new "National Exhibition and Convention Center" an amazing architectural work of art, an imposing building against which we couldn't avoid having cold feet (and not just for the cold weather).

There will be a series of FLAAR Reports subject by subject, but first we wanted to introduce the overall event, since this is now the largest printer expo in the world (sorry, it is larger than any and all other expos, no matter that their PR agencies claim).

Very simple: APPPEXPO has more brands, more booths, than every other expo in Europe, and more than any other expo anywhere in the Americas: North America or South America.

UV-Cured Printers

Hall by hall we at FLAAR were reviewing every single UV, textile, solvent, t-shirt printers, media, CNC router, etc.

Despite the endless size of huge halls and cold embracing our bodies, we were able to prepare a list of approximately 100 brands with an impressive 245 individual UV printers. PR agencies who claim their expos are "the largest printer expos in the world" clearly are impressive PR gunk and junk, because whoever wrote that PR release is either not in the real world of wide-format inkjet or is desperate.

We at FLAAR still recommend people attend their home-country expos (we attend GOA, ISA, and SGIA). We recommend people attend the main FESPA (in Cologne this year). But if you are a distributor, manufacturer, or print shop owner or manager, to miss APPPEXPO in Shanghai is to miss tons of information.

The summer heat of July for five years never daunted me to attend APPPEXPO in July. And the cold of March is a rather sad excuse to not attend APPPEXPO (just wear a sweater, long socks). But I will admit that I really enjoy studying printers, inks, media, cutters and software, so weather alone will not function as a pretext for us.



Flora XTRA-5000, capably manufactured by RTZ.



SkyJet FT3020H, SkyAir-Ship



Flora PP2512-1612

International Brands at APPPEXPO in Shanghai

What makes APPPEXPO worthwhile is that in addition to over 90% of the local Chinese brands you also get international brands.



Dilli Neo Totan RTR 5006D-W2X



Agfa Jeti Titan HS



Efi VUTEk H1625 LED

Solvent Printers

There were twice as many brands of solvent printers at APPPEXPO than at most other printer expos in China (so probably over 300% more brands of solvent printers at APPPEXPO than at any expo in Europe or the Americas).

Our forthcoming FLAAR Report on solvent printers will show a healthy sample of these diverse brands and different kinds of solvent ink (since by no means are all "eco" solvent, despite claims).



Atexto Cris-E



Audley ADL-D3200



Flora LJ320K



DGI Velajet VJ-1904X

Lots and lots of Textile Printers

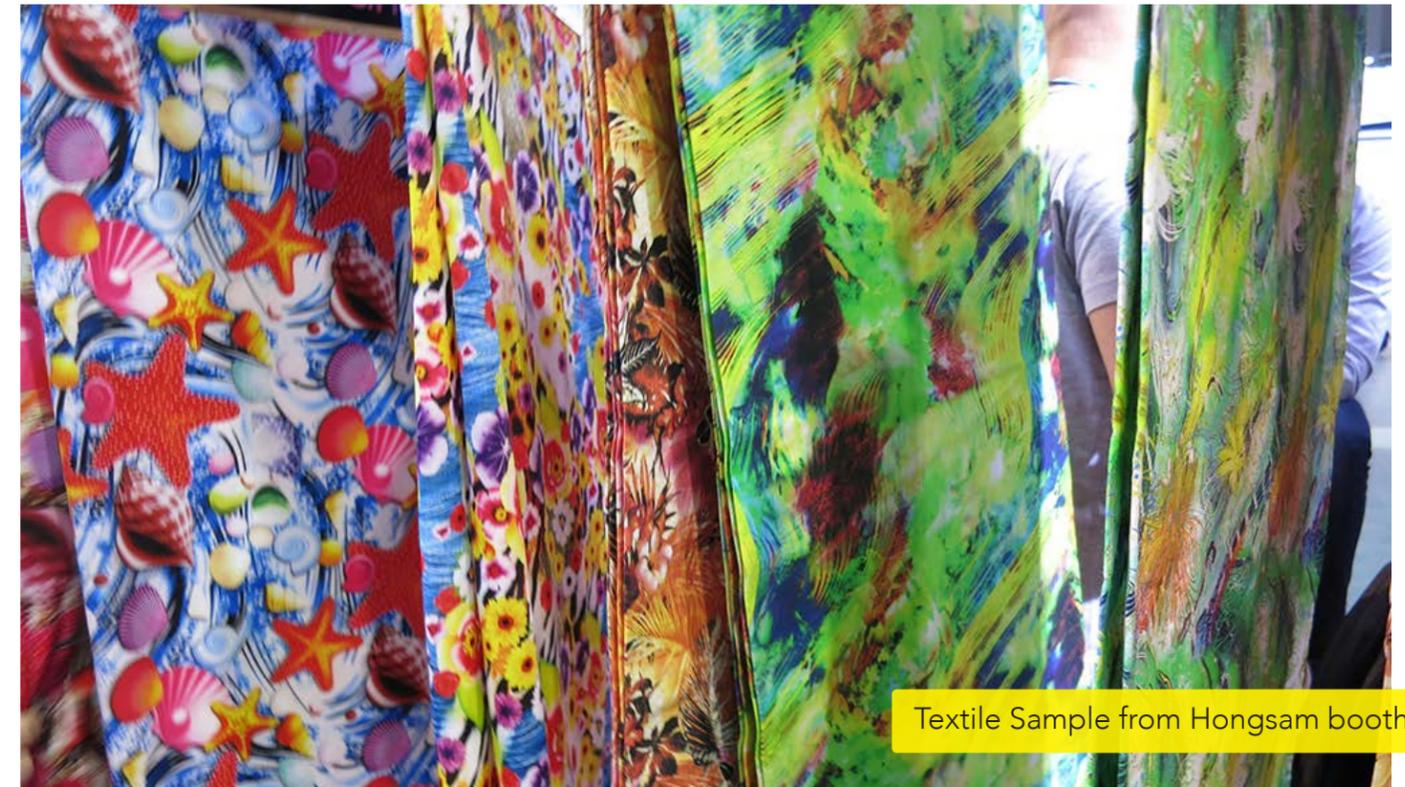
The difference between APPPEXPO and other expos in China is that here in the Shanghai expo you can meet the owners and top managers of the companies. At other expos the sales reps are the people in the booth: or the distributors. Often not even the factory team are at the regional expos.

For example, here at APPPEXPO the owner of most Korean brands were in the booths which exhibited their grand format dye sublimation system. When I attended JAPAN SHOP many years ago, not even top managers of not even the Japanese printer brands were in their booths in Tokyo.

Another aspect of APPPEXPO is that more booth reps speak English than at expos in several other countries. I can speak German, Spanish, and English and can understand French and Italian but even with these languages attending expos in Japan and Brazil was a challenge to find a language spoken by the booth attendants which I could understand.



Forni TX-3500D



Textile Sample from Hongsam booth



Xuli X6-2000



Anajet mPower mP5i at Mutoh booth

Many T-shirt printers

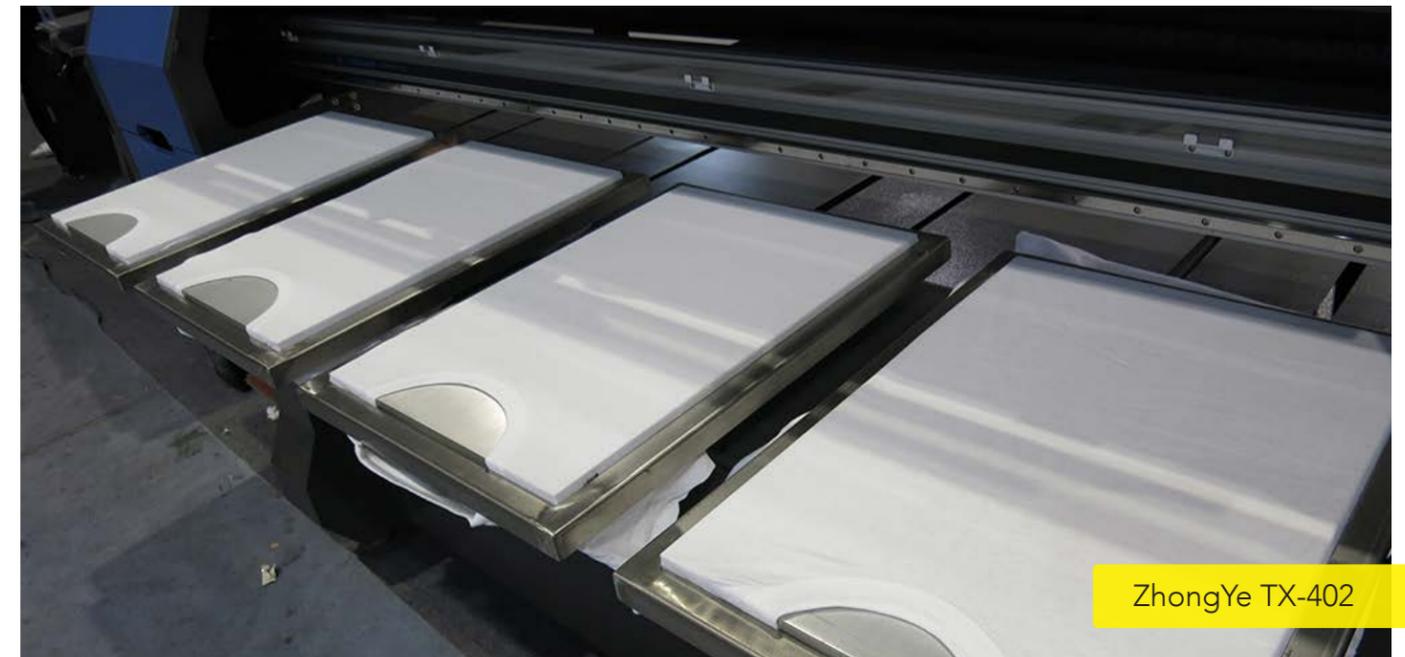
Most were desktop size for single T-shirts. But several booths had traditional solvent printer structures retro-fitted to hold two or three flat T-shirt platforms (of course also retro-fitted with sublimation ink).



DS-MLG



Epson Surecolor F2080



ZhongYe TX-402

Water-based printers

An occasional Canon printer could be found if you looked for hours. One would assume a few Epson water-based printers existed in their crowded solvent and dye-sublimation focused booth. HP had three water-based printers on display:

- HP Designjet D5800
- HP Designjet 6800
- HP Designjet T3500 (with attached scanner)



HP Designjet D5800

Latex

What about Mimaki latex printers? What about the Chinese latex brand?

Is there now a different new latex ink brand?

Why was HP latex so barely present at D-PES 2014 and was only a small local team at D-PES 2015?

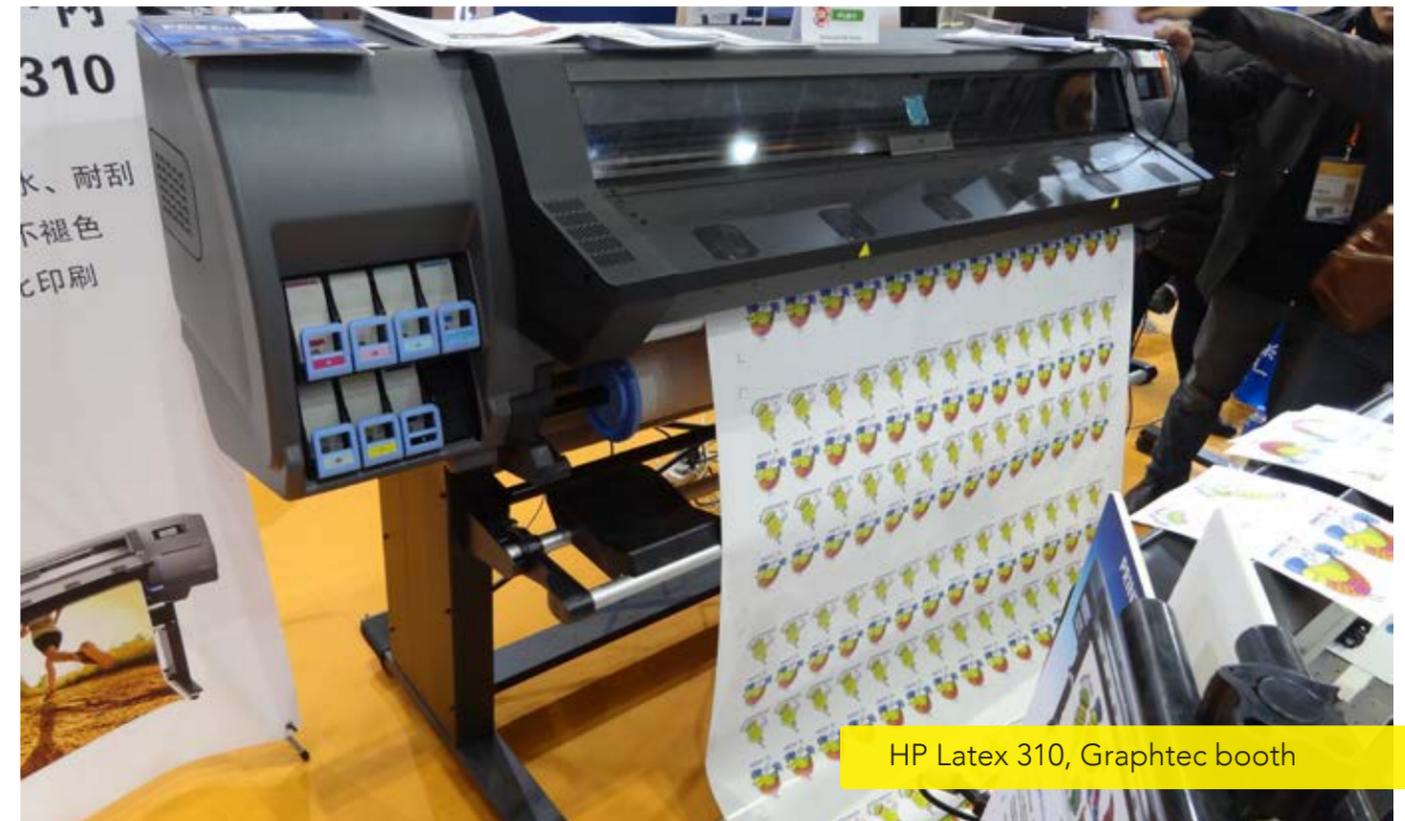
But here at APPPEXPO 2015 at least you could see the basic entry level HP latex printers plus the heavy duty model 3000:

- HP Latex 310
- HP Latex 330
- HP Latex 360
- HP Latex 3000

HP Latex 310 in booth of NAR, Hall 4.

In past years there were international managers of HP at their impressive booth at APPPEXPO 2014. But there must have been some other meetings at HP Barcelona headquarters this March (2015), since I did not notice an international presence here in the HP booth in Shanghai in March.

We discuss presence and absence of brands in the TRENDS level FLAAR Reports.



HP Latex 310, Graphtec booth

"3D Printers"

There were no actual 3D printers at any recent expo in China. What are (mistakenly) called "3D printers" are really 3D rapid prototypers. And 90% were entry-level, a new level all Made in China.

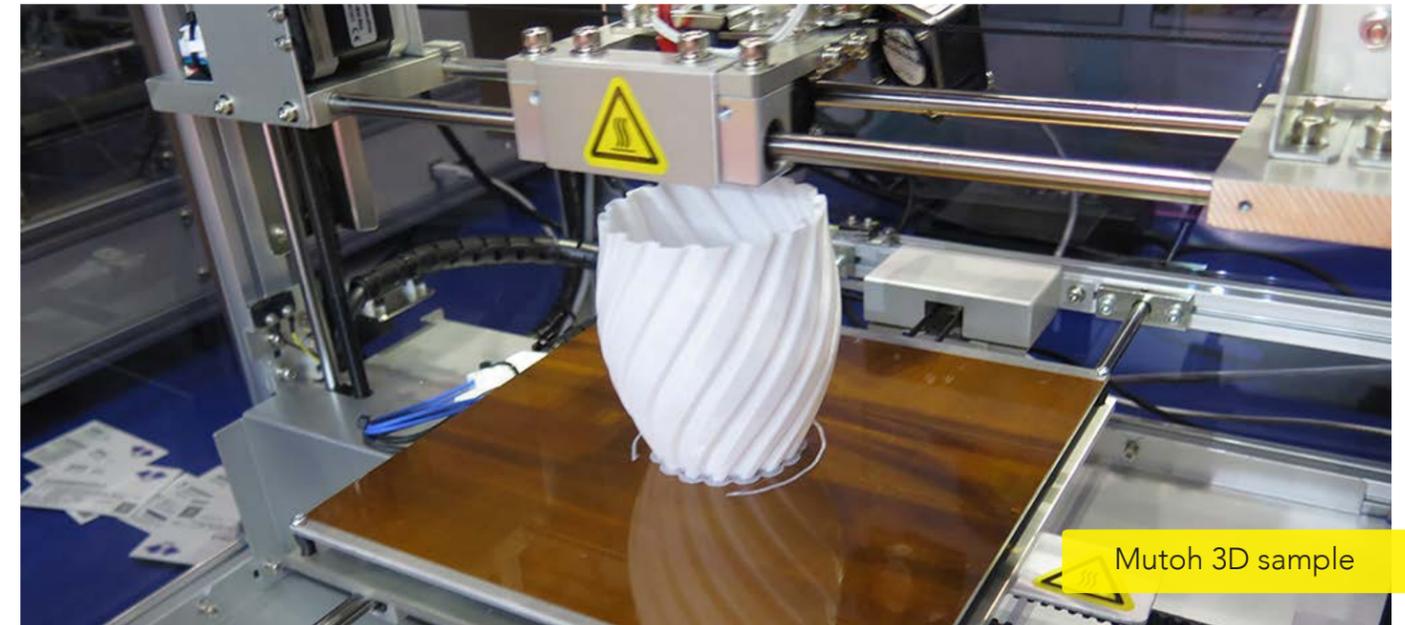
Mutoh had two nice looking 3D rapid prototypers in their booth. We need to check to see if these are made in China or made in Japan.

Suke had models also (www.SukeRKJ.com).

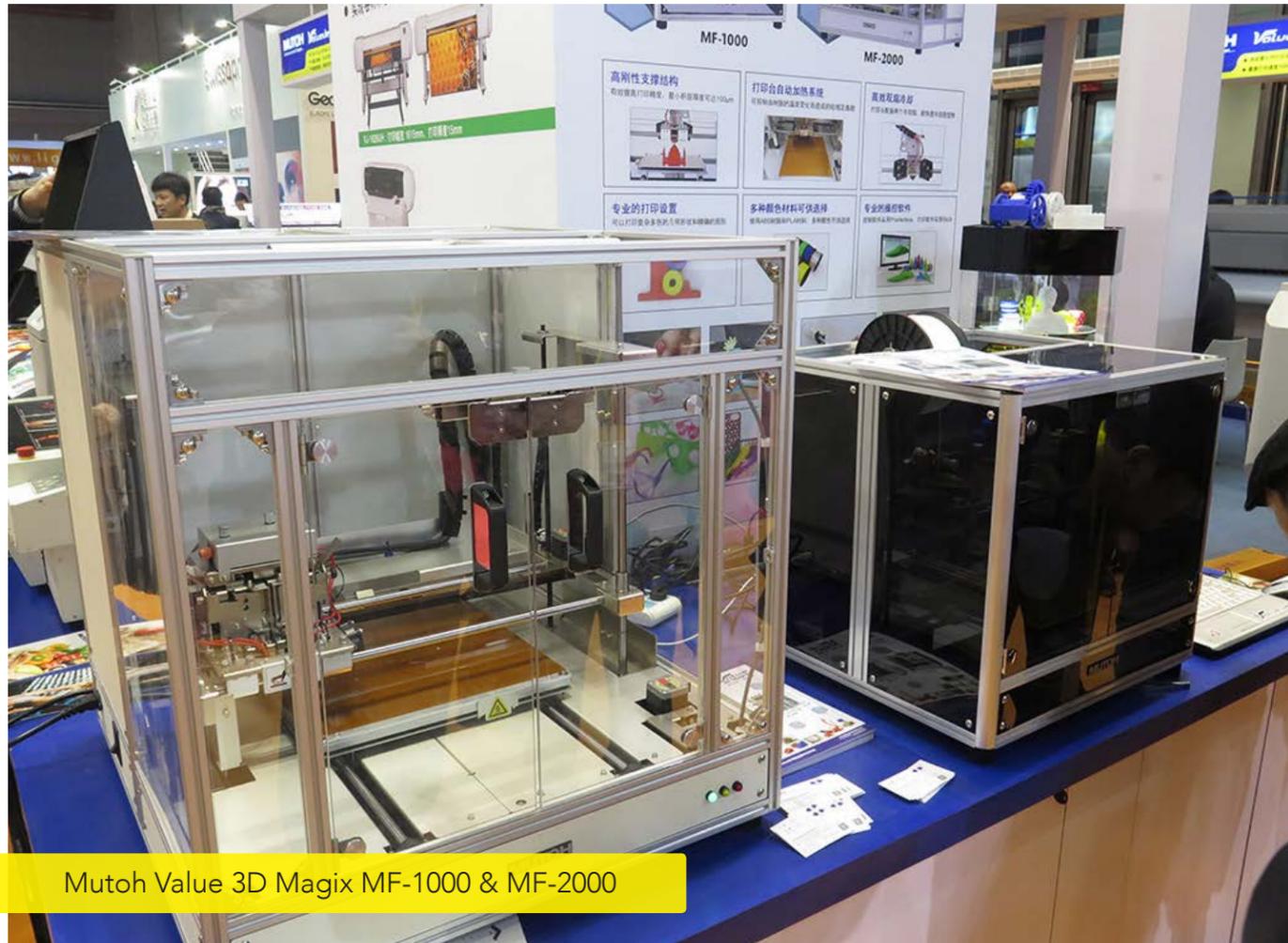
MOOTOOH (MOOTOOM, sic), often has nice entry-level 3D rapid prototypers at signage and inkjet printer expos.

Almost every 3D rapid prototyping printer is using this kind of polymer called PLA or Polylactic Acid for their constructions because of its biodegradable properties that makes it eco-friendly and the waste you produce can be reused to a new print.

We saw several booths of 3D machines at GOA 2015 in Miami.



Mutoh 3D sample



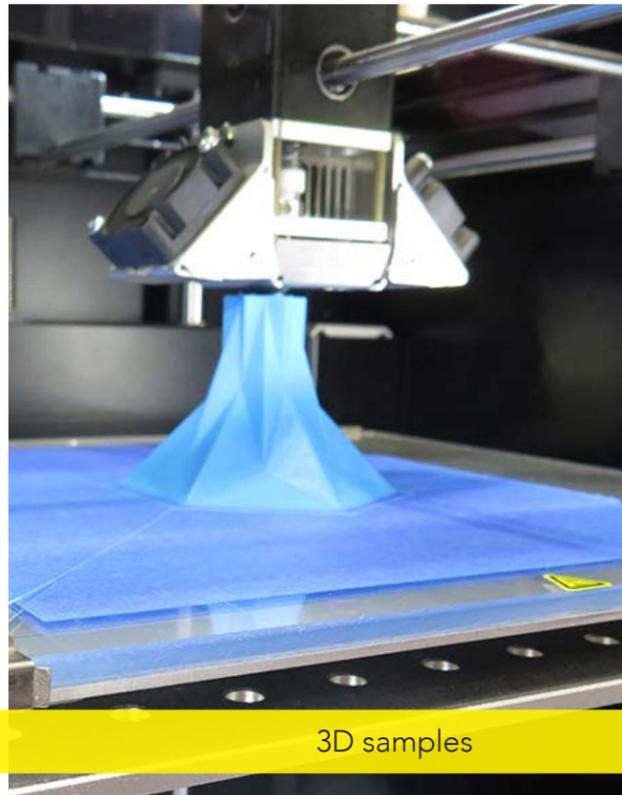
Mutoh Value 3D Magix MF-1000 & MF-2000



Gateway 3D rapid prototyping printer



MootooM 3D rapid prototyping printer



3D samples



"3D" Sublimation Printers

I first noticed desktop units named "3D" Sublimation Printers in late 2013. These are more like a variant of a heat press.



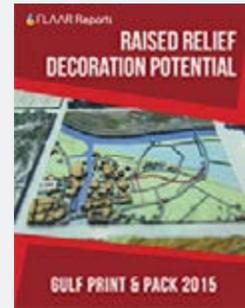
Zhengzhou City Moquan electronic Technology booth

Raised Relief Signage

The Skyjet (Sky Air-Ship) had an attractive yellow and black dragon in raised relief (on a wall inside their booth). We have a separate new FLAAR Report on a raised relief project of Oce which we saw at a recent trade show elsewhere in the world.

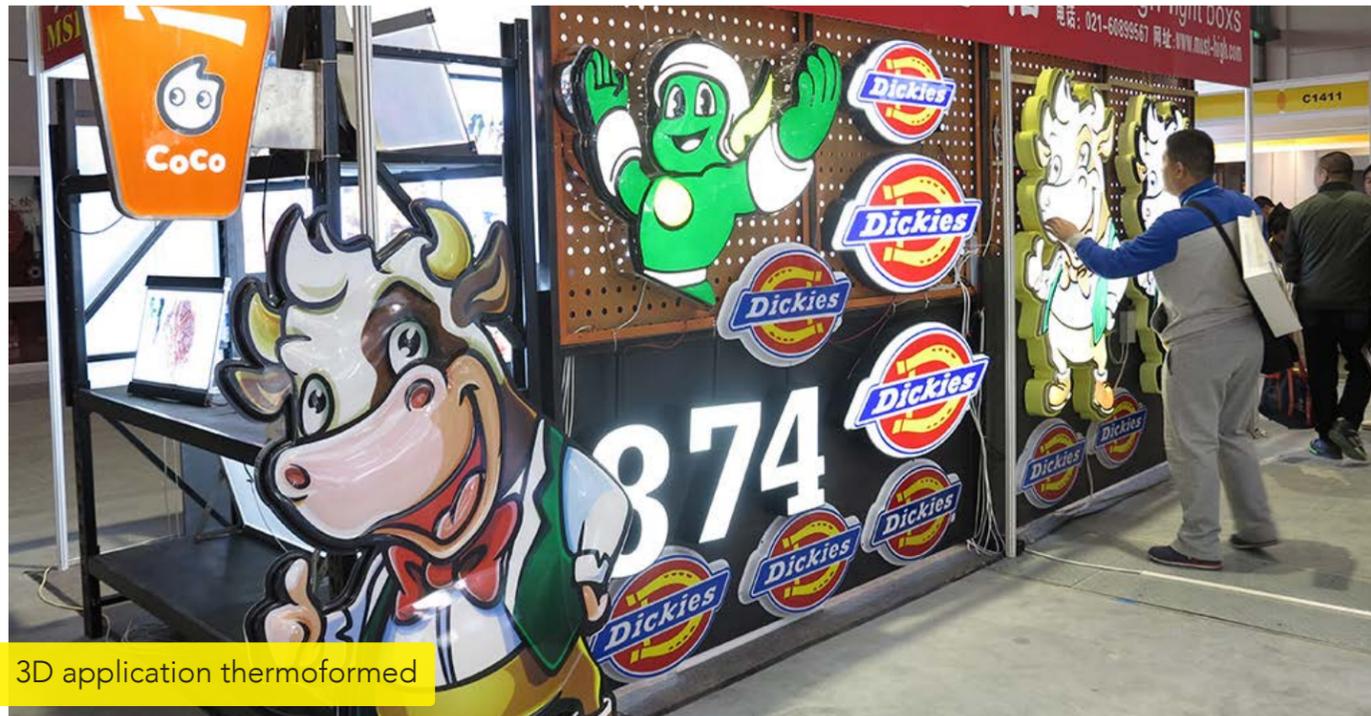
Order it NOW

This raised relief report can be ordered by writing FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org to be invoiced.

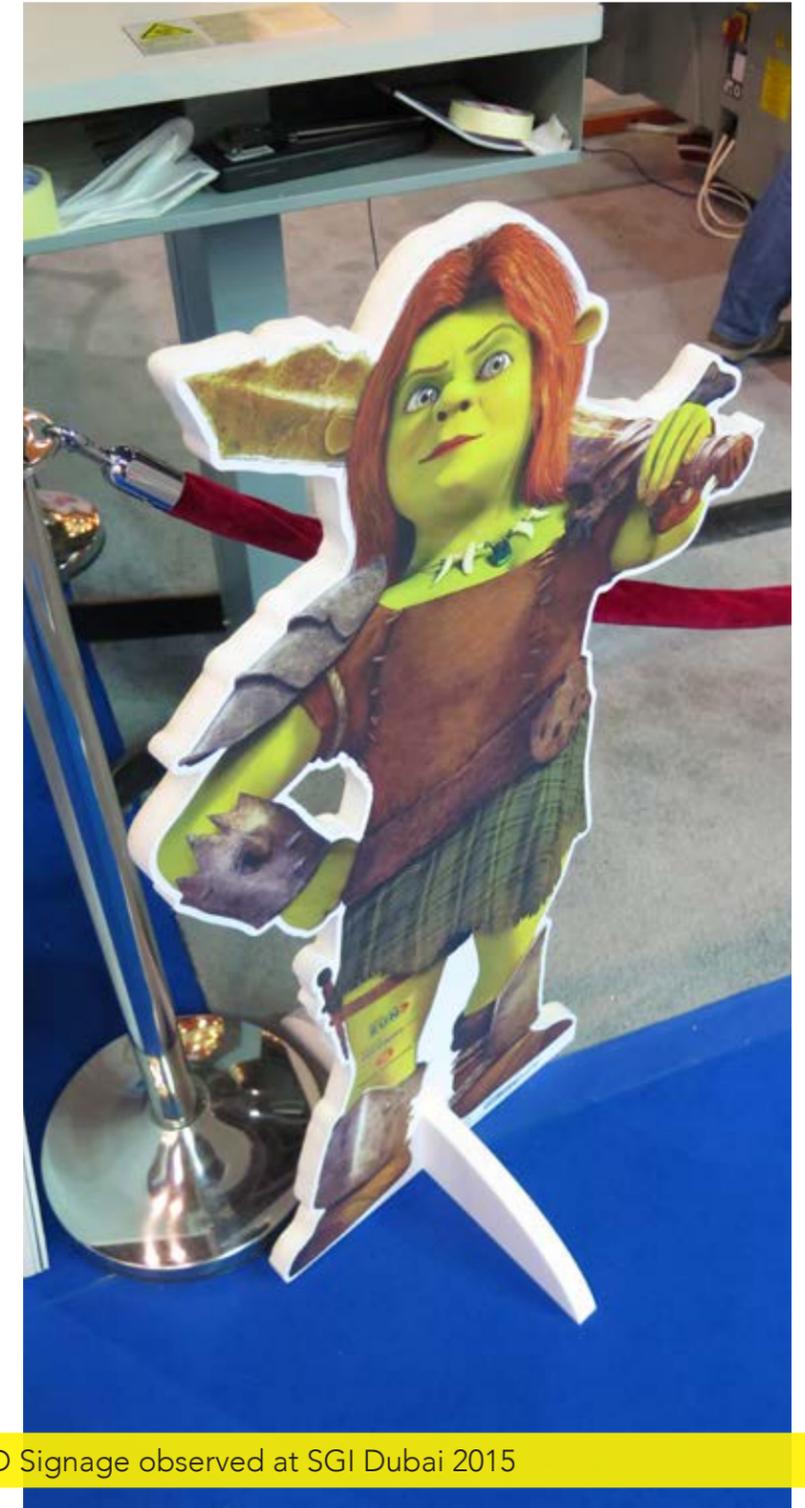


3D Signage

I did not see any full-size 3D signage (printed material). The only expo in the world that I have seen full-size 3D printed signage is at SGI 2015, aka Sign Middle East, Dubai. However you can use CNC routers to create 3D signage from wood, rigid plastics, and from other materials. At SGI they exhibit robotic cutters to create entire statues.



3D application thermoformed



3D Signage observed at SGI Dubai 2015

NEW Printheads

More and more, both distributors, manufacturers and printshop owners are asking FLAAR "what about new printheads?" In fact already several years ago we were hosted to visit Xaar headquarters in the UK, and their main offices in Shanghai, China. Plus we were hosted to visit many Chinese printer factories which were using Xaar heads (this was a long long time ago, when Xaar was a leader in entry-level printheads for entry-level Chinese printers). But several years later Epson DX 5 printheads took over the low-end, entry-level Chinese printer market, and Xaar moved into high-end single-pass printheads for Ceramic in-line printers. Now Dimatix (Spectra) is moving into the ceramic in-line printer market, so Xaar is searching for new applications.

Several brands of solvent printers use Dimatix Spectra heads. For UV-cured printers, KM 512 and KM 1024 series heads are very popular and Ricoh Gen 4 and Gen 5 heads are found in dozens of brands.



Printheads Epson DX5, DX6, DX7



Ricoh GH2200 printhead at Titan-Jet booth

Last year, at SGIA 2014 in Las Vegas, there were many rumors of a new "under \$400 printhead" to compete with Epson DX5 and EX7. At Graphics of the Americas 2015, in Miami, we learned much more, and actually saw the printhead (a FLAAR Report on the new DX5 DX7 competitor was immediately issued for the ink and printer and distributor companies who have a Subscription at TRENDS level).

During APPPEXPO 2015 in Shanghai it was possible to find a printer with the new "under \$400 replacement for DX5 or DX7." In fact our team found it the first day (we come to every printer expo with a list of goals; finding new printheads out in the real world (outside the demo room) was a goal for this Shanghai expo).

Order it NOW

This raised relief report can be ordered by writing FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org to be invoiced.



RIP Software

MainTop RIP is one of the few RIP companies that had their own booth.

I saw Caldera managers but no booth.

There were almost no color management companies because people use either no color management at all for their printers, or use generic profiles provided by printer or media companies. But the only ICC profile which is valid is one you do yourself in your own printshop.



RIP at MainTop booth

Cutters: for roll-fed signage

There was a Fotoba cutter in the HP booth. There were what looked like knock-off copies of Fotoba style printers Made in China in more than five other booths, such as JiNanMeiJie Trading company.

CDL was another company with a knock-off of the Fotoba original.

There were also several brands of table top slitters (more accurate than using an X-acto knife by hand).



Fotoba cutter

After-Market Inks

This year the increase of ink companies (distributor and manufactures) increase in a 10% compared with 2014. At this expo Pablo Martinez (in specialist on the FLAAR Reports team) had the opportunity to meet a couple of new companies that we haven't see before.

Sam Ink had a popular booth. Since it was near a corner of the hall it was easy to find. This ink company has flown our team to their world headquarters in Singapore three times, and we have visited companies in USA, Turkey, and Singapore who are using their inks (especially for HP and Roland printers).

STS Inks had a booth with their full team and lots of visitors. We have been to their world headquarters in Florida. STS Inks is one of the ten fastest growing inkjet ink companies in the world.



Sam ink booth



STS inks booth



STS inks

**CNC Routers,
CO2 laser engravers,
Flatbed digital cutters**

Hundreds and hundreds of CNC routers and CO2 laser engravers filled an entire hall with the noise and fumes of these kinds of cutters. There were also a few digital flatbed cutters, but most were traditional signage cutters.



Ruije CNC router



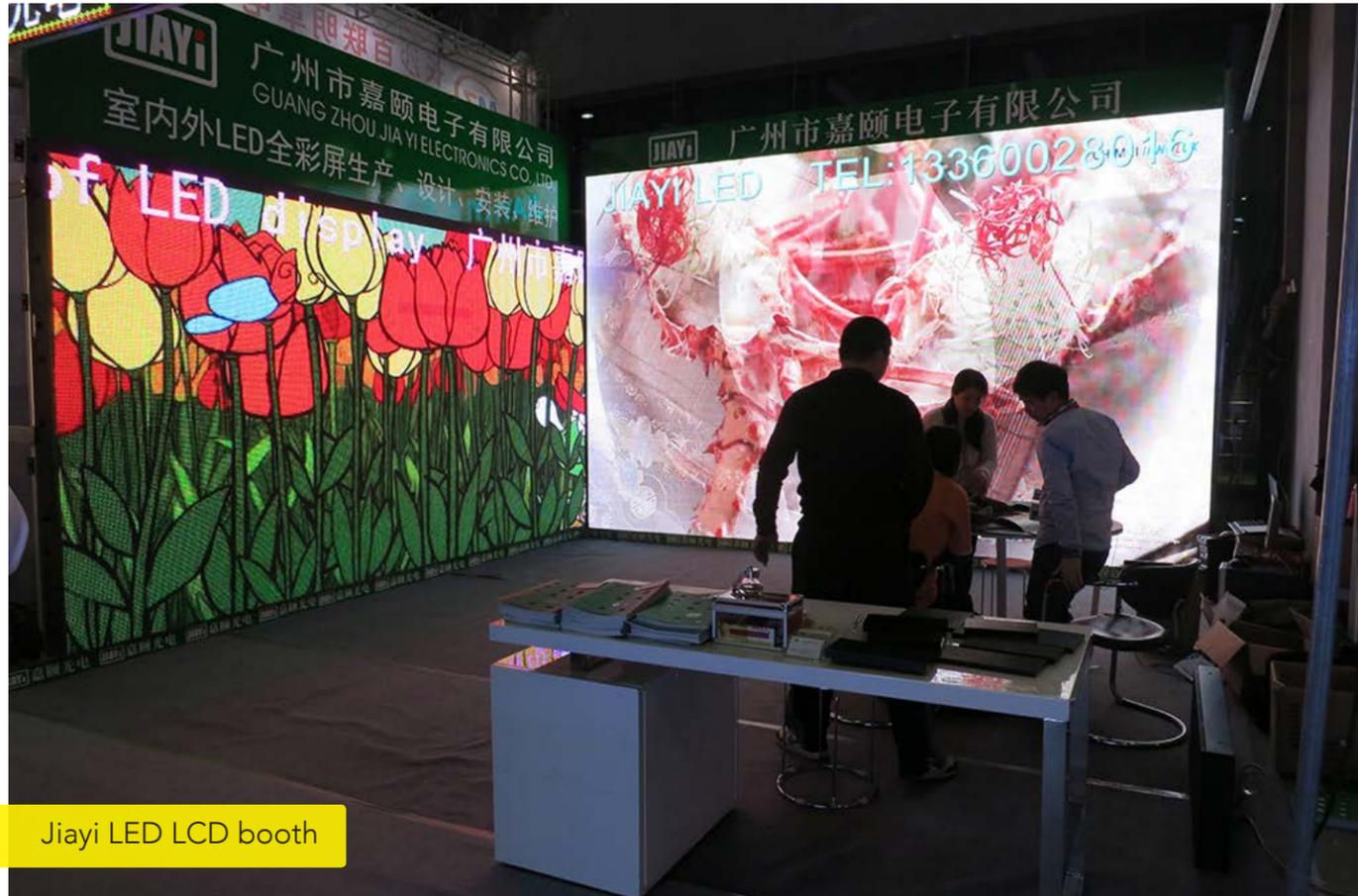
Metal Tailor CNC Laser



Laisai CNC Laser

LED, LCD Dynamic Digital Signage

All Chinese printer expos have adding co-located LED and LCD digital signage sections. So there was a lot of dynamic digital signage at APPPEXPO 2015, which we will cover in upcoming reports.



Jiayi LED LCD booth

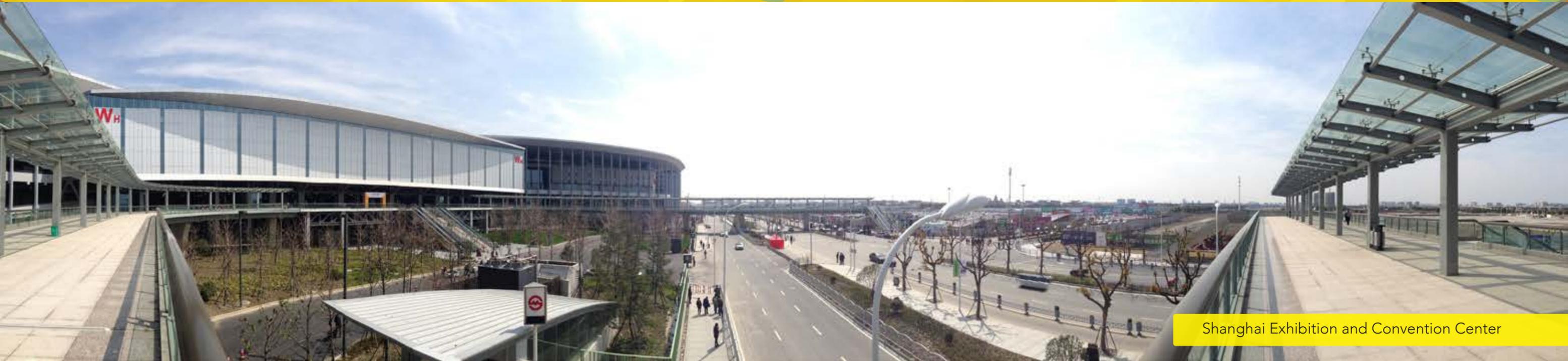


Traditional Signage

There were more booths of traditional signage at APPPEXPO than at any printer expo in Europe or USA. ISA 2015 in America also had much more traditional signage than the microscopic European Sign Expo of last year. We encourage people to attend FESPA in Cologne, for printers, inks, media, flatbed cutters, etc. And some traditional signage is probably better than none at all, but the expos in China and even ISA have so much more.



Traditional signage observed at APPPEXPO 2015



Shanghai Exhibition and Convention Center

Venue: Shanghai

We have a separate FLAAR Report on visiting Shanghai (and one on visiting Guangzhou for expos there). We will be updating our Shanghai city report but in the meantime here is a comment on taxis.

Taxis in China

Every taxi driver we had was either pleasant and friendly, or at least not a pain.

I have had more taxi drivers in Germany cheat me by "driving in circles to raise up the fare" than in China.

Not one of the taxi drivers could speak English, but all the Chinese drivers we had in Shanghai during APPPEXPO 2015 were helpful and polite.



It was easy to look for taxis at Hongqiao International Airport

Issues which should be improved for 2016

There were almost no hotels close to the expo center. At the old expo center you could walk to the expo from a diverse range of hotels. At the new expo center it could take 15 minutes to find a cab and close to an hour to get through traffic to reach the expo.

Then, the local authorities had an inappropriate security system which wasted over 23 minutes (waiting in line to pass through a scanning system).

Security is good for everyone, but this system here just irritated everyone. No way there was anyone capable of really noticing anything which should not be brought in, since entire crates of material had to be passed through.

We hope the organizers of APPPEXPO 2016 can create a VIP entry line for everyone from a foreign country: the excessive time wasted at the entrance every morning was really annoying.



APPPEXPO 2015 entrance



APPPEXPO 2015 General view



Crowds at APPPEXPO 2015 entrance



Hall maps observed this year at ISA in Las Vegas

A to Z Index of Exhibitors (without city names)

It is essential to have a second style of A to Z index, by brand names, and by company name without sticking the company in A to Z order by city (almost all Chinese corporations start their name with their city or province name). So there should be three lists:

- A to Z by Chinese style company name (meaning the company name starts with the city or province).
- A to Z by international brand name (include city name in company name but have the list organized A to Z by main word other than city name).
- A to Z by brand name: so Flora brand (RTZ company) should be under F in this list and under R or under Shenzhen in the other lists.

Hall maps at every entrance

Hall maps at main intersection points within the hall

ISA 2015 had the best hall maps of any expo in history! Giant maps, in the main aisle in key locations.

We (FLAAR) have made a list of suggested improvements for APPPEXPO 2016 and we have sent this complete list to the organizers. For example, printers can't print if the ink is too cold, so basic heating is essentially (plus of course for the attendees).

Aisle markers

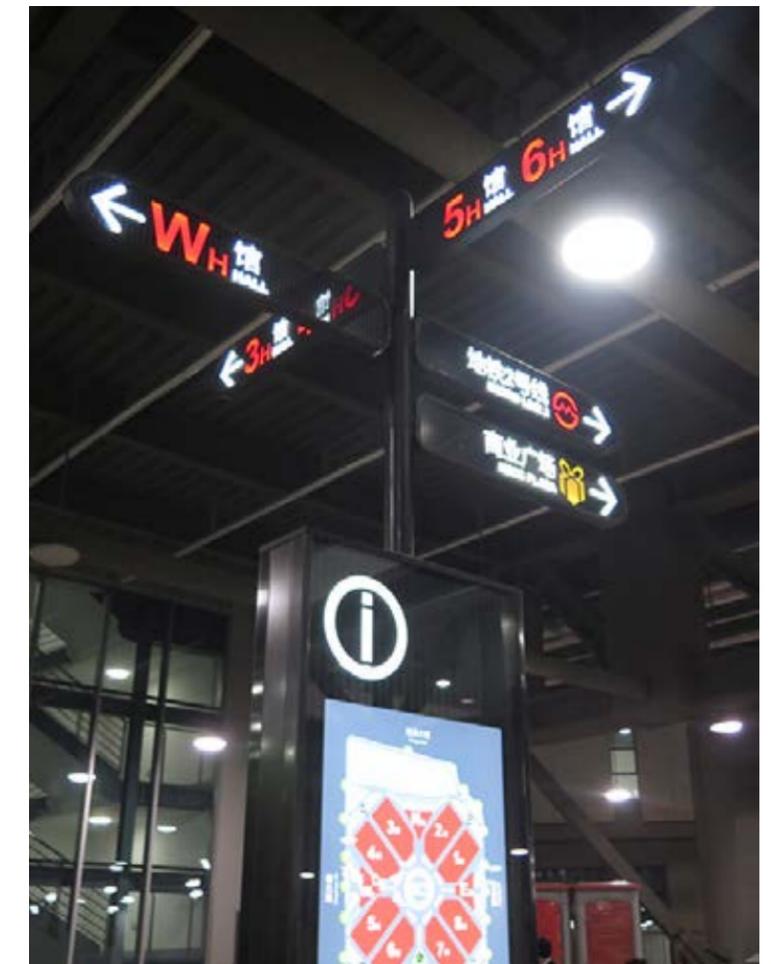
The most common mistakes made by expo organizers are:

- No aisle markers at all
- Or, Aisle markers with too much blah blah and too much advertising.
- Or aisle markers by group areas (the main mistake of FESPA).
- Have Aisles A to Z or 100, 200, 300 etc. No need to get cute.

Many many more signs needed to point how to get from one hall to another. Since the halls were in the shape of flower petals, the halls were not rectangular (clearly the architect never had to find his way around a large trade show; this is why I stopped studying architecture at Harvard because I noticed most architects wanted to win prizes for design, and I never saw entire firms working hard to design buildings to be user-friendly).

The expo center had a square guide on the floor: hundreds of these, all over the convention center. But they were not helpful, because it was unclear in what direction you needed to hike to get to the other halls.

The logo of the four-petal flower needs to be removed from this guide. Best not remind people of the awkward shape.



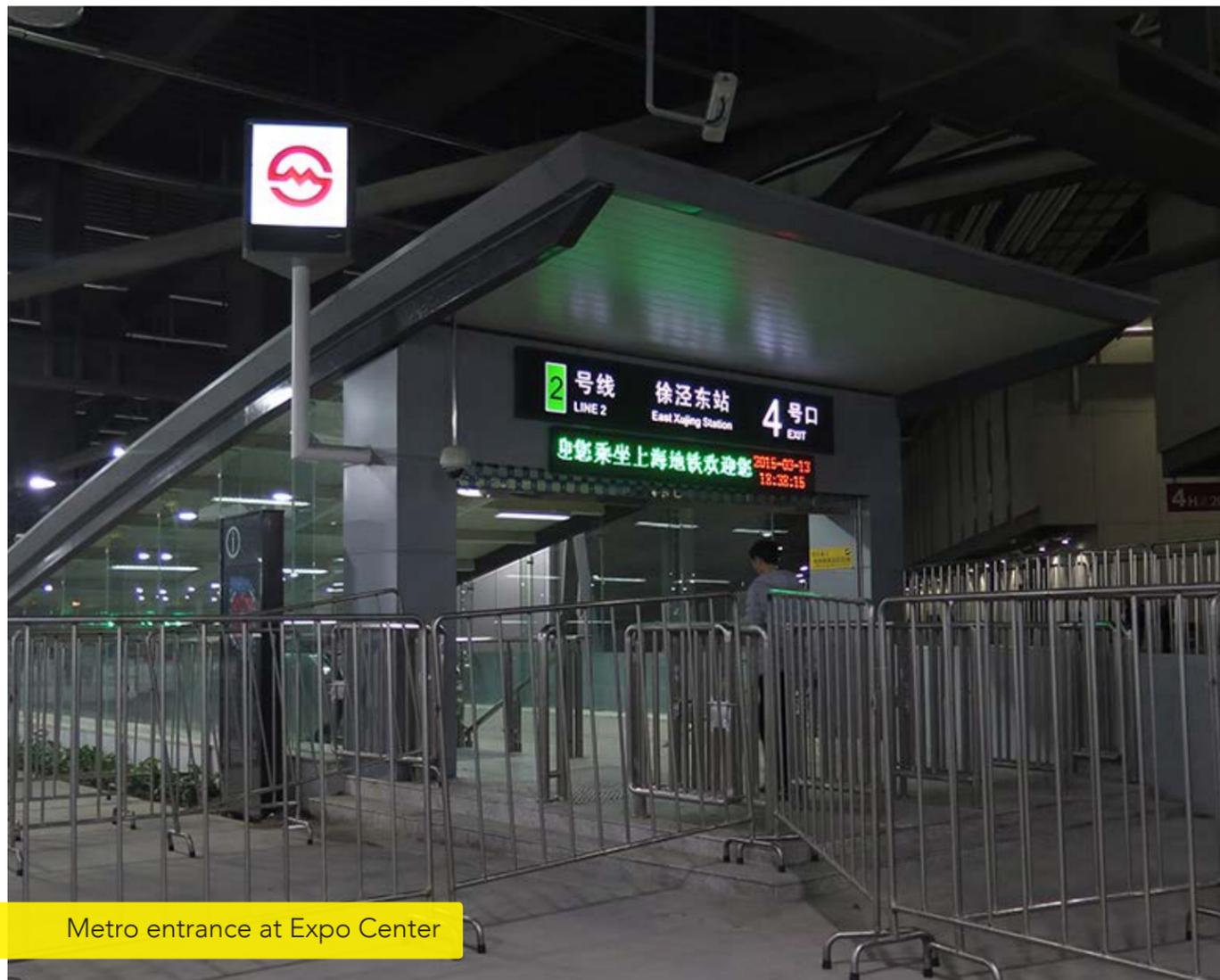
Hall Signage at APPPEXPO 2015

Issues, which will be improved for 2016

Yes, the convention center was barely finished. Frankly I was pleasantly surprised that the entire building actually existed. Lots of colleagues in China told me the previous month that (at that time) the convention center was not finished whatsoever.

The day before the expo opened there was no metro stop at the convention center. In fact everyone we spoke with told us that when they checked the Internet, there was listed as no Metro service to the Convention Center.

But in reality, there was Metro service across the street! And the tunnel to inside the convention center was open by the second day of the expo. So there was full Metro service: the Green Line. In other words, not everyone realized how new all this was, yet there were many things finished (such as the Metro line).



Metro entrance at Expo Center



APPPEXPO 2015 entrance

Conclusions

Every hour I was at APPPEXPO I learned new things about wide-format printers and signage. There were more new printheads here than at most other competing expos.

There were over 170 booths of media and materials: this is more than EVERY OTHER SIGNAGE EXPO IN THE WORLD.

And, where else can you find 100 brands of UV-cured printers!

Since the FLAAR team has lived in Beijing for 6 weeks in winter, we know how to dress for buildings without full heat.

There is so much to see, experience, and learn about at APPPEXPO that it is worth wearing warm clothes and surviving other challenges.

When the going gets tough, the tough get going. I can't remember the full idiom, but the idea is simple: if you want to move ahead in the world of wide-format printers, inks, media, substrates, cutters, etc. APPPEXPO is essential.



Shanghai Exhibition and Convention Center

What we cover in TRENDS level?

One person asked, "when will latex ink take over from other inks" We cover this in our TRENDS level FLAAR Reports.

Another logical question is "when will there be a flatbed HP latex printer?" We keep up with knowledge of flatbed latex printer developments (and delays, such as one brand dropping their flatbed latex printer) in the TRENDS level.

TRENDS level can be an annual subscription (which saves a lot: instead of buying them one-by-one, if you have a Subscription we send them to you privately as they are available).

Plus, if you have a full Subscription at TRENDS level, Dr Hellmuth comes to your booth at every major expo and presents the latest info in person. If you do not have a booth, he can present the info to your team at a breakfast or dinner meeting.

Another question is, "What will happen to 42" Memjet printer brands now that the HP PageWide system is available at 40 inches width?"

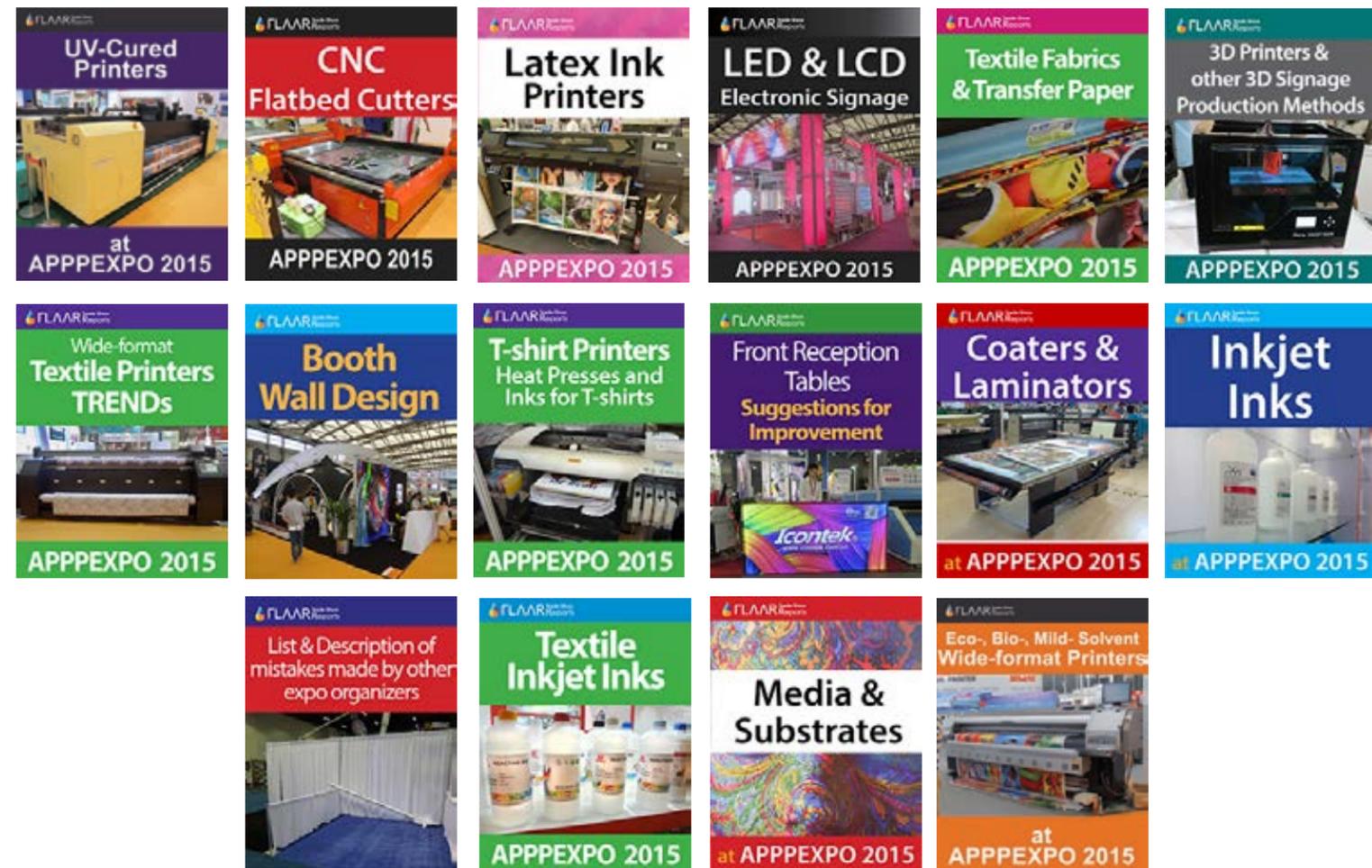
One person observed that "solvent printing is dead." This varies by world area: Mimaki, Mutoh, and Roland (and Epson and an endless number of Chinese clones) are selling solvent printers by the ton. But.... we can discuss this with you and your team as soon as you have a full-scale Subscription.

Another crucial question is 5-meter UV-cured printers made in China. When can they compete with Durst and efi VUTEK? And how about Dilli and JETRIX?

Plus, when will there be a 5-meter roll-to-roll HP Latex printer?

Now you see why we have a TRENDS level, for distributors to learn, for manufacturers to learn, and for big print shops to understand what is happening.

For more information you can ask to be invoiced for these FLAAR Reports by writing FrontDesk "at" FLAAR.org



This report has not been licensed to any printer manufacturer, distributor, dealer, sales rep, RIP company, media or ink company to distribute. So if you obtained this from any company, other than FLAAR itself, you have a pirated copy.

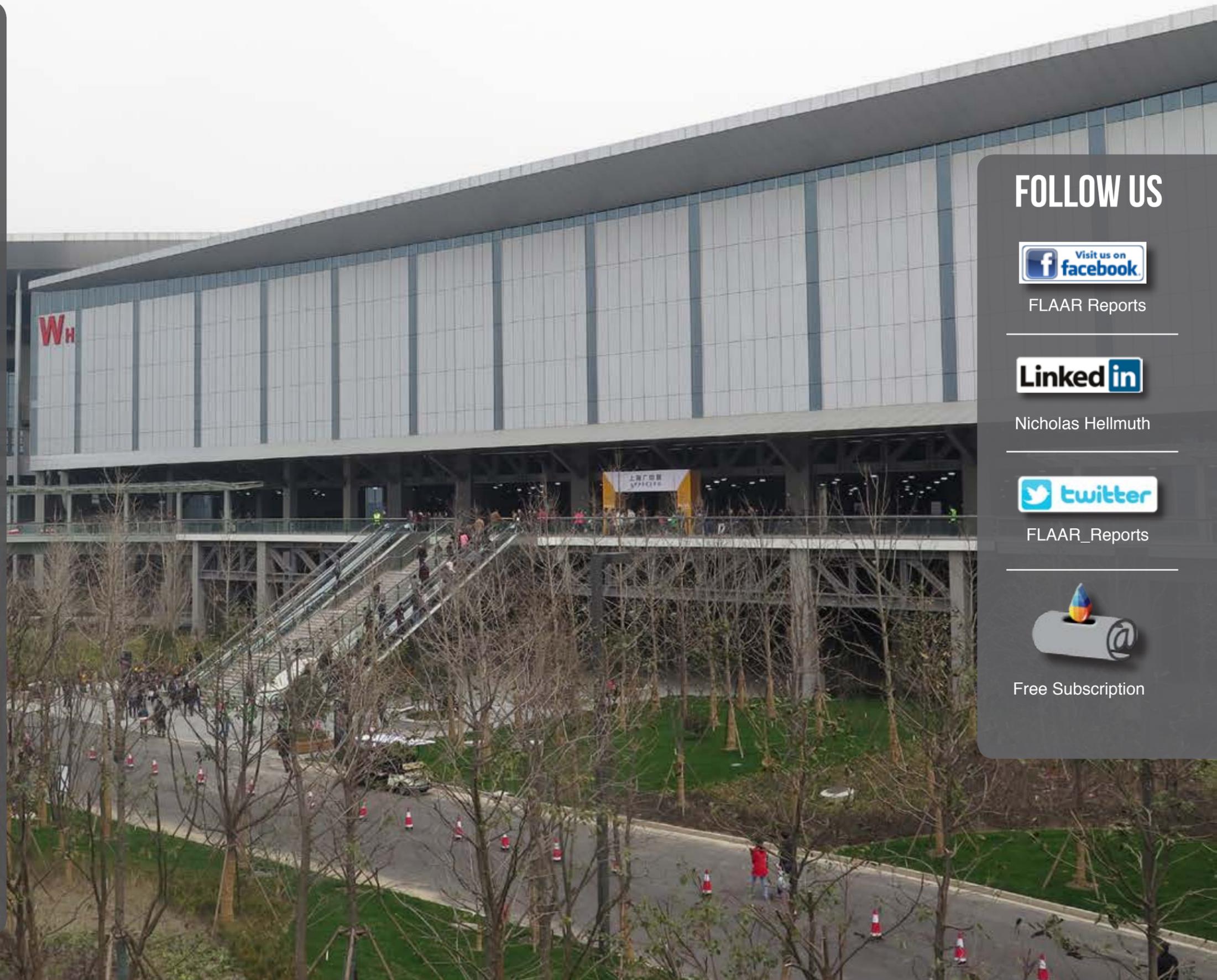
Also, since some reports are occasionally updated, if you got your version from somewhere else, it may be an obsolete edition. FLAAR Reports are being updated all year long, and our comment on that product may have been revised positively or negatively as we learned more about the product from end users.

PLEASE NOTE

To obtain a legitimate copy, which you know is the complete report with nothing erased or changed, and hence a report with all the original description of pros and cons, please obtain your original and full report straight from www.large-format-printers.org or other web sites in our network such as www.wide-format-printers.NET.

Your only assurance that you have a complete and authentic evaluation which describes all aspects of the product under consideration, benefits as well as deficiencies, is to obtain these reports directly from FLAAR, via the various sites in our network.

Copyright 2015



FOLLOW US



FLAAR Reports



Nicholas Hellmuth



FLAAR_Reports



Free Subscription